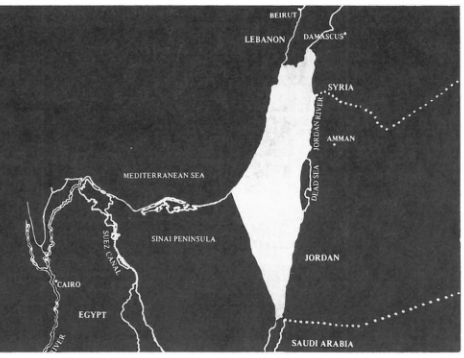
Palestine!



Vol. II, No. 3 Published by the Palestine Solidarity Committee May, 1978

PALESTINIANS WON'T COLLABORATE

US, Israel, Egypt at Impasse on West Bank

The determination of the government of Menachem Begin to hold on to the West Bank, the Sinai and southern Lebanon has destroyed illusions that peace in the Middle East is at hand. Even those forces in the Arab world most ready to accept a settlement based on capitulation to Israel—notably Egyptian President Anwar Sadat—have found their efforts forestalled by Begin's intransigence on both his eastern and western front, and then moxmocked by the sudden occupation of Lebanon as far north as the Litani River.

Meanwhile, President Carter has been unable to find a formula to resolve—or even reduce—the contradictions between U.S. clients in the region, Israel on the one hand, and the reactionary Arab regimes on the other. Three articles follow which trace this theme through the complications in the West Bank (below), the Sinai (page 13) and southern Lebanon (page 1).

U.S. President Carter, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat have all agreed on the solution they reject for the West Bank: an independent Palestinian state, brought into being through negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). They are still unable to devise a solution that they can all accept, however. Given the profundity of the contradictions in the situation, such a solution may continue to elude them.

Sadat's speech in the Israeli Knesset said everything necessary about his willingness to abandon the PLO in the scramble to find an accommodation with Israel: Sadat never mentioned the PLO in his address. Soon he was to hint that the PLO's adherence to the Tripoli conference declaration, which suspended relations with Egypt, meant the abrogation of the Rabat Declaration, in which the Arab states had acknowledged the PLO as sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Sadat was quick to reassure the Zionists of his rejection of the PLO: Rabbi Alexander Schindler, head of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations reported that while he visited the Egyptian President in January the conversation turned to "the fear of eventual Soviet-backed PLO rule on the West Bank." Sadat assuaged Schindler's anxiety by commenting, "We don't want them there any more than you do." Begin relates, according to the *Jerusalem Post,* that when he told Sadat that "some of these PLO members are Soviet agents," Sadat "corrected" him, saying, "No, not some. They all are." Sadat told a U.S. television audience in early January that in view of the "real irresponsibility" recently displayed by the PLO, he

(continued on page 2)

PLO WITHSTANDS INVASION

Lebanon: Analysis of Israeli War Aims

In the early hours of Wednesday, March 15, Israel launched the invasion of southern Lebanon—an assault which had been expected since the previous Saturday, when an al Fateh commando team waded ashore near the Haifa-Tel Aviv Road and took a busload of hostages. Israeli police opened fire on the bus and in the brief battle which followed the bus burst into flames and 33 Israeli civilians and nine of the Palestinian fedayeen were killed. Israeli Prime Minister Begin threatened to "cut off the arm of evil," that is, to eliminate the PLO presence in southern Lebanon. In southern Lebanon itself, where the Palestinian and progressive Lebanese forces had long been expecting an attack, an alert had been in effect since the Saturday of the commando raid.

When the Israelis finally struck, they did so with a terrible force, a force which hit hardest at noncombattants. Some 2,500 civilians were killed and 265,000 fled as refugees.

Naval vessels deployed off the Lebanese coast opened fire on Lebanese towns and Palestinian refugee camps; U.S.-

(continued on page 14)

Protest against Israeli attack onPalestinians in Lebanon organized by PSC March 17 outside NYC Israeli Mission.

Protest Begin and the Zionist Parade
May 7 NYC see details back page

West Bank *(continued from page 1)*

would not be adverse to the Palestinians choosing King Hussein as their leader.

Begin, of course, continuing in the policy formulated by the Labor Party governments preceeding him, flatly rejects any dealings with the PLO or the idea of a Palestinian state. On September 1 the Knesset reaffirmed the government's rejection of negotiations with the PLO by an overwhelming vote of 92 to 4 with six abstentions.

THE U.S. POSITION

In a secret memo to Israel furnished as an inducement to accept the second Sinai disengagement in 1974 the U.S. had bound itself to restrict the Geneva Conference to the parties already participating. New parties were to be admitted only with the unanimous consent of the participants—giving Israel the right to veto admission of the PLO. The U.S. maintained a quite consistent stance throughout the regimes of Nixon, Ford and Carter against participation of the PLO in international negotiations. The occasional highly ambiguous hints of possible willingness to meet with the PLO have been discontinued. At his December 15 press conference Carter remarked haughtily that the PLO has "completely rejected United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 and 338." They have refused to make a public acknowledgement that Israel has a right to exist in peace," and thereby "have themselves removed the PLO from any immediate prospect of participation in a peace discussion." Brzezinski put it, with less qualification: "Bye-bye PLO."

Carter's earlier discursions on a Palestinian "homeland" have been since carefully defined as not intended to mean an independent state. On December 28 he announced that he opposed creation of a "radical, new independent nation" for the Palestinians. He had specified that a Palestinian entity "ought to be associated with Jordan." Carter thus has set himself on the same strategic course in which Henry Kissinger headed so unsuccessfully in his time. In a speech to the World Jewish Congress on November 3, Kissinger reiterated his concern that an independent Palestinian state would be "destabilizing" and therefore, by inference, inimical to U.S. interests in the Middle East: "A separate Arab state on the West Bank, whatever the declaration, whatever the intention, inevitably must have as its objectives those that cannot be compatible with tranquility in the Middle East."

But while Kissinger never pursued a regional settlement in the Middle East, that is Carter's goal. Carter has been guided, since he became president, by the broad outlines of a report issued by a Brookings Institute study group at the end of 1976. This influential report recommended a "comprehensive" approach to the Middle East diplomacy rather than the "step by step" strategy then being employed by Kissinger. The report counseled a "solution" to the Palestine problem including at least the appearance of self-determination as part of the comprehensive settlement. It did not take a position on the question of the PLO's representational status or on the issue of a Palestinian state or linkage with Jordan. The fear that underlay the Brookings report was that a continuation of the Israeli occupation would lead to explosive confrontations between Israel and Arab states in the region, posing a real threat to U.S. corporate and geopolitical interests.

THE REGIONAL STRATEGY

These interests would best be served, in the view of the U.S. foreign policy establishment, by creating a regional "stability" presided over by conservative regimes—particularly Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Iran. Before 1973 the U.S. government troubled itself remarkably little about the relations between its Arab and Israeli clients. The October war and the ensuing oil boycott, however, gave the most graphic evidence of the existence of a new situation in which difficulties and dangers for the U.S. could result from uncontrolled conflict between reactionary Arabs and Israel.

This new reality was the indirect result of the tremendous increase in the proceeds from Arab oil production in the seventies. The wealth pouring into the coffers of the Saudi ruling elite called out for regional opportunities for investment. Saudi capital is now being sunk into enterprises and real estate in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Egypt. But regional economic power requires regional political power—Saudi Arabia must concern itself not only with repression of radical movements inside its own border, but is preoccupied with the preservation and extension of conservative political instutitions throughout the region. An expression of this new conservative thrust in the area is the Saudi-Egyptian alliance.

Saudi Arabia's regional political ambitions are threatened, however, by the blatant continuation of Israeli occupation of Arab territory. The Saudis cannot accept the political cost of being branded as a passively acquiescent subsidiary of the U.S. government, patron of the Israeli occupation. Thus Saudi Arabia is compelled to adopt the posture of nationalist opposition to Israeli occupation.

It has become critical for U.S. imperialism to defuse the situation, to remove the constant source of irritation, leading to sudden and unpredictable flareups between the major props of U.S. power in the area. Consequently, Carter is seeking a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East, a settlement to heal the old wound dividing the Israeli and Arab reactionaries of the area. However, Israeli Prime Minister Begin is clearly pursuing not a comprehensive settlement of the entire conflict but a bilateral agreement with Sadat—and even that in a most lackadaisical manner. Sadat presented a unique, and unconvincing plan to transform essentially bilateral talks into an ersatz multilateral agreement. He would first negotiate "general principles" of a regional agreement with Begin on behalf of all the Arabs. Those who declined his invitation to the Cairo conference in December 1977 missed their opportunity to have any input into the formulation of his "general principles." They could later join the talks if they chose to.

The U.S. is thus the only force at present engaged in active diplomact to bring about a comprehensive settlement. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and Undersecretary of State Alfred Atherton have been dispatched on rounds of Arab capitals, but thus far have produced only the most tacit forms of support for Sadat in Riyadh and a careful refusal on the part of Hussein to participate in public negotiations with Israel at this point. The U.S., apparently trying to stress the regional strategic perspective, has sought to emphasize the role of Iran, with Carter meeting Hussein in Teheran.

> The leftist Beirut weekly *Al Hurriyah* maintains "The Shah of Iran has been brought into the picture because of Sadat's isolation and out of the fear on the part of members of the imperialist-reactionary alliance that too fast a pace on the road to capitulation would confuse the political configuration which this alliance has labored long and hard to build to its advantage during the past ten years.
>
> "The Shah played an important role even before Sadat's visit to Israel. However, following the Shah's recent visit to Muscat, Aswan and Riyadh and the appearance of his growing aggressiveness in the south of Arabian peninsula and in the Horn of Africa, his role in relation to the Palestinians and the American-proposed settlement plan has begun to expand."

The Shah recently proclaimed his distress with Begin's obstruction of negotiations, and uttered one of the emptiest threats of all time in a region which has long rung with the rhetoric of unreality. The Shah, major supplier of Israel's oil, is prepared to cut the pipeline—but only if the U.S. invokes a boycott of Israel.

Having notably failed to bring about a "comprehensive" peace through the usual process of negotiation, Carter has tried to "sweeten the package" through a new ration of military hardware

(continued on page 4)

FBI SURVEILLANCE OF U.S. PRO-PALESTINIAN ACTIVITIES

Arab-American Arrested in Israel

Sami Esmail, a U.S. citizen of Palestinian descent, was arrested at the Ben Gurion Airport in Israel on December 21. He had been enroute from Michigan to visit his father, who was near death in Ramallah in the West Bank.

Esmail was charged with "membership in an illegal organization" (the PFLP) and "contacts with enemy agents." The arrest apparently stems from his political activities at Michigan State University, where he was a graduate student and teaching assistant and involved in Arab student affairs. The FBI has not denied that he was under surveillance in East Lansing, or that they furnished information about him to Israel.

FBI agents told an aide to Michigan Congressman Bob Carr, who inquired into the case, that it was "common practice" to exchange intelligence information with "friendly governments."

The indictment cited meetings and literature distribution in which Esmail is supposed to have participated in Michigan. The Israeli government also charges that Esmail traveled to Libya in August 1976 for millitary training at a PFLP camp. Some confusion arose on this point when Israeli officials in the U.S. stated in response to questions that Esmail had spent "four" or "several" weeks in Libya. The National Committee to Defend the Human Rights of Sami Esmail, which contacted people who had seen Esmail in the U.S. during August, came to believe the trip to Libya never took place. Later it became clear that the Israelis were charging Esmail with spending only two weeks in Libya.

Sami Esmail himself appears never to have denied this. Ernest Goodman, a Detroit attorney who was a National Lawyers Guild observer at part of the trial, related Esmail's testimony that he had been given a free ticket to Libya in August 1976 as part of a Libyan government program to attract intellectuals to their country. He spent two weeks in Libya, according to this account, where he participated in meetings and discussions about the Palestinian resistance. At the end of two weeks, according to the report of his testimony, Esmail was offered an opportunity for military training and service in Lebanon with the PFLP, but only on condition that he make a six month commitment. He declined the offer, and returned to the U.S. by the end of August.

The only evidence produced thus far, according to Goodman, are three confessions signed by Sami Esmail. All three were signed before he was allowed to see his attorney, Felicia Langer, and before he was allowed—under guard—to visit his father, who was by then unable to recognize his son, and on the verge of death from arteriosclerosis.

Langer has asked that the confessions be dismissed as evidence since they were extracted by coercion. According to the report, Sami testified that he was questioned for prolonged periods, denied more than two consecutive hours sleep for an entire week; and that he was punched and forced to stand holding a heavy chair for a long time. The third and most damaging statement is in Hebrew, a language which Sami does not speak or read. The police claim that Sami made a statement in Arabic which was then translated into Hebrew and written down. Sami denies that the confession is true.

The U.S. State Department failed to take action which could have helped Sami's defense. They refused to waive diplomatic immunity to allow Mark Davidson, a U.S. consular official, to testify at the hearing to determine the admissability of the confessions. Davidson, the first consular official to visit Sami, had received his complaint of mistreatment by the authorities and had observed his condition. Felicia Langer believed Davidson's testimony would help show that the confessions were coerced. However, the State Department allowed Davidson only to submit an affidavit, to which the prosecution objected. The court upheld the prosecution objection, preventing even one affidavit from being entered as evidence.

*Palestine!*photo

Rasmieh Esmail joins PSC-organized picket in front of N.Y.C. Israeli Mission on March 13, the eve of her son's trial. Demonstrations were also held in San Francisco, Boston, and Dearborn and East Lansing, Michigan—all mobilized by organizations affiliated with the National Committee to Defend the Human Rights of Sami Esmail.

The arrest and trial of Sami Esmail have raised questions about Israel's claim to extraterritorial jurisdiction—the right to try a person for an act committed outside its border—which is contrary to the fundamental principles of most legal systems. Israel's claim, made in a far more extended way than that of any other state, includes subjecting people in the U.S. to trial for acts completely legal where committed. Thus Sami Esmail is on trial in great measure for his political activities in Michigan—making statements, holding meetings, distributing literature and, in the words of the indictment, "discussing ideology," all protected by the U.S. Constitution.

The F.B.I.'s role in the case is particularly subject to criticism. If, as seems apparent, the F.B.I. furnished information on Sami's political activities to Israel, they made him vulnerable to trial in Tel Aviv for the very acts which could not lead to his arrest in the U.S.

The National Committee to Defend the Human Rights of Sami Esmail has asked that people write to the Israeli Embassy in Washington to demand that Sami be freed, and to the State Department to request that all appropriate action be taken to obtain Sami's release. Contributions toward the costs of his defense may be sent to the National Committee at 1118 South Harrison, East Lansing, Michigan, 48823. □

West Bank *(continued from page 1)*

for his rightwing friends in the region, Arabs and Israelis equally. Of course, as usual, the Israelis are to be more equal than the Arabs: under the package plane deal. Carter proposed to sell 50 F-5E's to Egypt, 60 F-15's to Saudi Arabia, and 15 F-15's plus 75 F-16's to Israel.

CONCENSUS AND CONFLICT

A major factor in Carter's failure to achieve an agreement between Begin and Sadat is the inability of Israel, Egypt and the U.S. to agree on the future of the West Bank. Any specific international discussion of the future of the West Bank discloses that while there are significant areas of agreement, the most Begin is willing to offer to less than Sadat—and Hussein who stands close behind him—can dare to accept. Sadat has given qualified approval to Begin's plan for the West Bank, but Hussein refuses to participate in negotiations without the promise of a more than "consultative role" in the West Bank. The U.S. is diligently searching for a compromise between the old United Hashemite Kingdom plan, calling for a Palestinian entity federated with the East Bank and presided over by King Hussein as monarch, and the Begin plan, based on continued Israeli occupation with a "self-administration" of Palestinian collaborators and a limited political role for Hussein.

There are major areas of agreement between the two plans, and above these the hopes of Carter must flutter. Both plans have been rejected by the PLO as forms of denial of Palestinian self-determination. Both plans assume creation of an Israeli-West Bank-Jordanian common market, with a continuation, very probably an intensification, of the colonial advantages now accruing to the Israeli economy. Under either plan the West Bank would continue as an Israeli colony, with a majority of its working class commuting to jobs in Israel, its markets flooded with Israeli manufactured goods, crippling the future of its own industry, and its bridges to East Jordan the conveyor belts for Israeli exports to the Arab world.

Despite the similarities between the plans, there are enough differences to make agreement impossible at least thus far, and very possibly in the future. Begin's proposal offers humiliations which will be difficult for any Arab leader to accept and survive politically. It is modeled on nineteenth century forms of colonialism —it is in fact of the stuff which provoked the Boxer Rebellion.

BEGIN'S PLAN

Begin proposes that the West Bank and Gaza be presided over by an elected "administrative council." The council would, however, have jurisdiction over only the Arab residents of the areas, while the Jewish residents of the settlements would be governed by the Israeli government. An oversight committee consisting of a Jordanian, an Israeli and a local representative would determine the important matters, such as immigration, by unanimous vote—giving Israel a veto. The administrative council would deal only with local education, health, social welfare and similar matters; security and "public order" would remain in Israeli hands. Zionists would be guaranteed the right to settlement, and Palestinian Arab residents could opt for Israeli or Jordanian citizenship.

The proposal claims that the question of sovereignty will be left "open." But even the conservative Arab regimes cannot accept the blatant continuation of Israeli occupation and domination, de facto sovereignty assured by the presence of Israeli settlers and soldiers.

The ambitious settlement plan of Israeli Agriculture Minister Ariel Sharon calls for ringing the urban population centers of Jerusalem and Jenin with Israeli settlements, and building another settlement center at Sebastiya between Nablus and Tulkarm. Another chain of settlements running north to south, just west of Jenin, Nablus and Ramallah would cut the Palestinian Arab population of these towns off from the Palestinian Arab villages on the Israeli side of the pre-1967 border. Still another series of Israeli developments running east to west would link the coastal plain with other newly settled areas. On November 9, the ministerial settlements committee approved the building of a new road linking Lydda with Ma'ale Adumim. This is to be the first of many roads planned to transect the Arab rural population centers and enhance Israeli military control of the region.

These plans assume that the Jordan River will be the permanent "security frontier." A new passenger terminal at the Allenby Bridge, a Jordanian River crossing point, was decreed by the Ministry of the Interior to be a "recognized international border crossing point." The terminal, built at a cost of nearly a million dollars, is so obviously intended for permanent use that many of the West Bank notables invited to its opening ceremony boycotted the affair.

THE SEARCH FOR COLLABORATORS

There are two varieties of obstacles to a peace settlement involving the West Bank. The most immediate is the failure of the U.S. government to find a formula acceptable to all of its clients in the dispute—Israel, Egypt and Jordan. Secondly, even if these three states were to agree, the scarcity of collaborators in the West Bank would make any implementation of a traitorous settlement highly problematical.

The plans of Sadat, Carter and Begin all rest on the availability of a credible group of Palestinian collaborators to serve as officials. However, the peculiar dynamics of the Israeli occupation seem not to have produced such a group in the West Bank. The older feudalists linked to Hussein have been universally discredited: the municipal elections of 1976 unseated them in

Israel continues to value Hussein's role as opponent of PLO support on the West Bank and as a rallying point for the straggling band of old conservative notables. When Hussein's supporters were decisively defeated in the West Bank municipal elections in April 1976, the Jordanian and Israeli governments devised methods to perpetuate the control of Amman over the West Bank. The following story is just one example.

Just around the time that Moshe Dayan was agreeing to become Begin's foreign minister under a formula which would see the West Bank remaining unannexed but occupied—"never," in Dayan's words, "to fall under another sovereignty"—the Israeli government became concerned about the economic development of the West Bank. On May 26, 1977 Radio Israel reported that the military government had allowed West Bank mayors to make trips abroad to raise funds for their municipalities "because they believed that a push to give development of the area momentum would induce calm in the region and save Israel a lot of money." On the other hand the Israelis were anxious lest the "extensive development projects planned in the West Bank are also aimed at establishing a foundation for a Palestinian state."

King Hussein was also unsure whether to allow the entrance of these development funds, and forced all the mayors to deposit the monies in a bank in Amman. The Israelis finally decided to allow the import of the funds, but only for approved projects, and only if channeled through Jordan, giving Hussein veto power.

Hussein showed how quickly and arbitrarily he was prepared to use this veto power last fall. When a number of West Bank mayors failed to appear in Amman for the King's 25th anniversary celebrations, he blocked the development funds for Hebron, Jericho, Bira, Ramallah, Nablus and Tulkarm, unappeased even by letters of apology from some mayors for missing the jubilee. The funds were released only when pressure was building on Hussein to produce some West Bank notables ready to accept self-administration.

UP TO DATE

ISRAELI FINANCE MINISTER SIMCHA ERLICH VISITED SOUTH AFRICA in early February, the first time an Israeli cabinet member has made an official visit to the apartheid regime. Erlich arranged direct private South African investment in Israel of up to $50 million over the next three years as well as a $40 million line of credit for Israeli purchases from South Africa. The Israeli government hopes that the new measures will decrease Israel's balance of trade deficit with South Africa.

South Africa, on the other hand, stands to benefit from joint ventures with Israeli concerns, industrial investments in Israel for enterprises to process South African raw materials or partially finished goods, and from exports to Israel for re-export to other countries. As Erlich told an audience of South African businessmen during his stay Israel is able to act as a "bridgehead" into the Common Market and U.S. for South Africa, enabling South African exporters to avoid the extensive boycott on South African products.

Trade between Israel and South Africa now amounts to $90 million a year.

A SECOND SHIPMENT OF U.S. ARMS HAS ARRIVED IN LEBANON as part of a $25 million military aid agreement concluded in September, 1977. The U.S. shipped 49 M113 armoured personnel carriers to the Lebanese government, which is in the process of reconstructing its army after the splits and disintegration it suffered during the civil war. In November 5000 M16 rifles are reported to have arrived in Lebanon, along with ammunition.

ISRAELI REPRESSION AT BETHLEHEM UNIVERSITY CONTINUES. Several months ago six students were arrested for "unauthorized publication" of a university journal. Those students are currently out on bail, awaiting trial in a military court. In December five more students were arrested and charged with holding an "illegal gathering." It is a criminal offense in the occupied areas to hold any political gathering without the formal approval of the military governor. The meeting on December 13, called to protest Sadat's diplomatic initiative, had been attended by 600 students and teachers from Bethlehem and Bir Zeit Universities.

The detained students include Mohammed Yussef Abarghit, Bassan Elias Banura, Yussef Mohammed al Maslamej, Yussef Othman an Namari, and Hamdi Ibrahim Farraj.

TWO BIR ZEIT UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WERE BEATEN SEVERELY AT THE MILITARY GOVERNOR'S OFFICE IN RAMALLAH on January 6. The occupation authorities were trying to force the students to confess that they had stoned a military vehicle, which they denied. One of the students, Khalid Mohammed Abid Rubboh was hospitalized after his release when he collapsed, was in severe pain, had an erratic pulse, and was possibly suffering from internal bleeding.

A letter protesting the brutality was signed by nine teachers at Bir Zeit, predominantly foreign staff members. The signatories included, according to the letter, "those who directly witnessed the entry of the students into the interrogation building, the sounds of the interrogation, the silhouetted figures of those giving and receiving blows, the emergence of the victims and the medical examination and hospitalization."

A U.S.WOMAN HAS BEEN SENTENCED TO FIVE YEARS IN AN ISRAELI PRISON for allegedly conveying information to a "terrorist" organization and rendering service to an illegal organization. The prisoner is Terre Fleener, a 23-year-old student from Texas. Although the trial was held in secret and no one present has been allowed to divulge the details, the acts alleged apparently involve only standard "tourist" photos of public areas. Following her arrest, F.B.I. agents interrogated her relatives, University of Texas officials and a teacher about Fleener, telling at least one person that they were gathering information at the request of the Israelis, and not investigating any possible violation of U.S. law. Professor Catherine Edwards, a teacher of International Politics at the University of Texas at San Antonio reports that the F.B.I. agents questioned her about the political attitudes Fleener had expressed in the classroom and about her position on the Middle East conflict.

Attorney Felicia Langer is appealing Terre Fleener's harsh sentence. A National Committee to Defend the Human Rights of Terre Fleener has been formed. (Write to P.O. Box 28326, San Antonio, Texas, 78228.

ISRAEL ARRESTED TWO JOURNALISTS ON SECURITY CHARGES in January. Hans Lebrecht, an Israeli journalist for L'Humanite, L'Unita and East German radio, and a member of the Central Committee of Rakah, the Israeli Communist Party, and Kanayotis Paschalis, a Cypriot press photographer were held for allegedly "consorting with hostile organizations." A police official told the court that the "spying" consisted of the collection of government yearbooks, maps and other materials available to the public.

Felicia Langer, Lebrecht's defense attorney, described the arrests as "political revenge and attempted intimidation of a journalist." She said that Lebrecht had never been involved with spying.

TAYSIR AL ARURI HAS BEEN FREED FROM ADMINISTRATIVE DETENTION. After being held without charges since April 1974 al Aruri, a professor of physics at Bir Zeit University was released by the occupation authorities in January. Petitions and demonstrations in the U.S. coordinated by the Palestine Human Rights Campaign had demanded al Aruri's release.

However, as soon as some of the administrative detainees are released, others are arrested and jailed without charges. In November 1977, for example, Suleiman Abu Jalia and Abd al Rahman Alarabawi were seized under the Defence Regulations of 1945, draconian laws from the British colonial period.

LEBANESE WORKERS IN ISRAEL ARE BEING PAID LOWER WAGES THAN THEIR ISRAELI COUNTERPARTS, according to Major Sa'ad Haddad commander of the right wing Lebanese forces allied with Israel. When the Histadrut Secretary General Yeruham Meshal met with him, Haddad complained that the workers who pass into Israel through the so-called "Good Fence" are discriminated against; they receive lower wages and no social benefits.

favor of nationalists, drawn primarily from professional and small business sectors. There is a scattering of men who have used the occupation to enrich themselves as suppliers of labor or by becoming local agents. However, these people have not been able to achieve significant influence in the West Bank. Thus Sadat refused to invite to Cairo the various West Bank delegations which made an abortive effort to travel to Egypt to congratulate him for hsi diplomatic initiative. Ramallah mayor Karim Khalaf commented that the would-be delegates "do no even represent their own wives," and the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* dismissed them as "third rate personalities."

The situation in Gaza is somewhat different. There Mayor Rashad ash Shawwa's pro-Jordanian politics "are motivated by considerations that are primarily economic," according to the *Jerusalem Post*. As an owner of large citrus orchards and related interests in this sector, Shawwa requires Hussein's help to market his crop in Iran via Jordan. For his part, the King finds Shawwa an appropriate candidate for the task of creating an all-Gaza leadership (despite his Palestinian opinions which are no secret.)

"The mayor thus occupies the position of uncrowned representative of the Hashemite Kingdon in the Gaza Strip. Practical expression of this informal position is manifested not only in the arranging of permits for Gazan lorries to travel to the West Bank (with Gaza produce), but, crucially, in the granting of Jordanian passports to all Gaza Strip residents who wish to travel to other parts of the Arab world via the Jordan bridges—a point of great importance since they possess no other travel documents whatever." *(Jerusalem Post)*

Even Shawwa, however, declined to participate in the Gaza delegation of congratulation to Sadat. The *Jerusalem Post* was forced to admit that, according to one source, "the delegation is made up mainly of people who have personal business to handle in Cairo. These include some former employees of the Egyptian government who are owed back salaries from before the Six-Day war. One member of the group, the source said, was freed from a Cairo prison two years ago for smuggling hashish."

The prevailing sentiment in the West Bank was reflected in a statement read at a meeting at the Arab University Graduates Club in Jerusalem on December 19. The declaration, signed by a long list of West Bank mayors and representatives of labor, women's and professional unions, protested the formation of congratulatory delegations to Sadat and upheld the PLO and Palestinian national rights. The statement specifically opposed "any attempt to create an alternative to the PLO," and reaffirmed committment to the Palestinian struggle for national rights. □

STRIVE FOR FULL ROLE IN REVOLUTION

Palestinian Women Speak

Palestinian women have come to play a crucial role in their people's national struggle, despite traditional cultural restrictions. In the refugee camps in Lebanon the women's organizations operate in the most basic units of the social structure. They run educational, economic and health centers and they work to organize women's participation in the political and military struggles.

Women's organizations in occupied Palestine play a similar role. Their production workshops and cultural projects have helped maintain the cohesive unity of the Palestinian population and buttress it against the fierce military occupation. They have demonstrated their ability to come to the fore in rallying Palestinians against the Israeli occupation. Women and schoolgirls were at the forefront of the first demonstrations in the West Bank after it was occupied by Israel in 1967.

The women's organizations of the various commando groups are linked through the General Union of Palestinian Women, established in 1965 as the official mass women's organization of the PLO.

Women are rare in the leadership of the commando organizations, absent from the top leadership, and few in numbers in the military ranks. Despite the limited success achieved till now the most active women avow their intentions to continue to forge ahead to develop the capacity of every woman to participate in the national struggle to the highest degree possible. They struggle to overcome the obstacles created by traditional culture, which has limited young girls to work inside their homes and prevented them from even participating in activities alongside men.

In the forced transition from a peasant society in Palestine to life as refugees away from their homes, many women have had to seek work, thus taking a major step toward independence from family confines and opening the door to political participation. Today most of the women's organizations run their own production workshops, which are accompanied by literacy classes and political education to accelerate this process. At the same time they provide women with skills and incomes necessary to their survival.

The following interviews, conducted by two *Palestine!* staff members traveling in Lebanon last year, describe how women view their role in the Palestinian revolution.

Palestinian women in a PLO textile factory in Beirut.

Palestine! photo

"Our main task is to develop the woman politically and economically so that she will be centered in the revolution, so that she will have a great role in the revolution."

This is how Sukeila, member of the Central Committee of the Women's Organization of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, described her group's political thrust during our visit to Beirut. Her comrade Fatma, in the leadership of the organization in two Beirut refugee camps, translated for Sukeila as she and two other members joined in the lively conversation.

We sat at a small table on tiny chairs in a room of a new kindergarten, one of several reopened since the war in Lebanon. They serve a dual purpose: educating the young children while freeing their mothers from the traditional chores which have kept them isolated in their homes for so long.

The Democratic Front, al Fateh, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the other commando groups each have their own mass women's organization. The members, along with other individual women, belong to the General Union of Palestinian Women, part of the PLO. In all the camps the General Union has committees, in which representatives of the women's organizations are active.

When her own organization was founded in the Palestinian refugee camps of Jordan in 1969, explains Fatma, it focused on training for military and first aid work, and launched a literacy program. "We had a high percentage of illiteracy. Most women go to school to third or fourth grade and then leave because of needs in the family, or maybe the family will not allow their daughters to continue. After this they stay home and lose even what they have learned. So this literacy program is very important. We have a program which teaches them how to read and write and at the same time develops their class and political consciousness."

"We have many political meetings for women in the camps," Sukeila explained. "At these meetings we discuss the up-to-date political situation, and bring the women to understand the position of the revolution from what is happening in their area."

The organization also has committees in the camps for women workers and girl students which focus on their political needs. And in each camp are committees which work with and care for the families of fighters killed in the struggle.

"What do you do when a young woman is interested in working in the committees and her father says no?" we asked. "In all work, in every committee," responded Fatma, "we try to have the acceptance of the family. We go ourselves and speak with the fathers, to try to make them understand our role is important, that they should *push* their daughters to participate in this way."

"It is quite evident that after the experience of two years of fighting in Lebanon," she continued, "the reluctant father or mother began to ask us to let their daughter go and work with us and develop with us and develop herself."

Mobilization of women during the Lebanese war was widespread and rapid, and many who joined the revolution for the first time are now continuing to work—often in health care or education. Sukeila, who throughout the war was in Naba'a, a part of the "belt of misery" surrounding Beirut, described the role of women there and in the nearby Tal al Za'atar refugee camp.

"Women with training were in the barricades and participated in the military tasks. Women guarded offices and had an important role in fortifying the area. This was very important because some areas were so close to the enemy and could be penetrated. They would take bags and fill them with sand and carry them to the fourth or fifth floor of the buildings. And in the end, women were doing more—they were playing a role in mobilizing the people to help build the fortifications and supply the military.

"One of the first things the women's organization was asked to do was distributing food to the [civilian] people and keep them

steadfast in their area throughout the clashes. The whole area was encircled and most of the people didn't have storage houses, so after using what they had there were no more supplies. Besides distributing food, the women cooked and brought food to the front lines three times a day.

"The women's organization set up emergency health centers wherever there were clashes. This area had 200,000 people. And it was very difficult to take the injured out of the area."

"During the siege it was difficult to collect garbage, there were few medical supplies, and there was really a danger of an epidemic spreading if something was not done. So the women's organization started a campaign for cleanliness and campaigns for preventive medicine. We organized weekly to collect and burn the garbage in all streets in the area, and to visit homes to give medicines to people who were suffering from ailments or illness—to try to deal with preventive medicine.

"The women would also, regularly, get the news from the radio and write pamphlets or papers describing the situation in the area and other areas in Lebanon, and hand them out while they were bringing food to the front lines. They also collected information about their own area to send to central offices in Beirut."

"Women have become more involved in the revolution," concluded Fatma when we asked about the changes in the role of women in Palestinian society in the past decade of intensified resistance. "If you go to any office of the Palestinian organizations you see that many women work there. Through the fighting in Lebanon we've managed to have some women participate in the military. In the camps you see that it is the women's organizations that have a great role in health centers, in schools."

"But if you take any camp," she noted, "you still find that the women's organization is different than the men's—it's not as much as we hope. The women sympathize with the revolution, but once it comes to their daughter, to work, to participate, it's difficult."

"We continually work in the camps to develop the woman's situation. What we hope to do is more than we have done."

In an interview with Mai Sayegh, the Vice President of the General Union of Palestinian Women, we asked about the role of her organization. The Union was formed shortly after the PLO was founded in 1964. But its roots go further back in Palestinian history, as Mai Sayegh explained.

"In 1919 in Jerusalem, two women, Zalikha Ishaq al-Shihabi and Leila Sakakini started the first Palestinian Women's Union. The Palestinian Women's Union led demonstrations against the British Mandate, against immigration to Palestine, and against [the British] taking prisoners to jail and hanging them."

"The organization was an answer to the aggression against the Palestinian people," Mai Sayegh explained. "From the beginning it had a political basis and was mainly to organize women to participate more and more to liberate Palestinian land."

Women, mostly from the urban middle class, held a number of conferences during the 1920's to organize against the British sponsorship of Zionism. And in the 1936-39 armed rebellion in Palestine, peasant women supported, and in some cases participated, alongside the fighters.

"When the PLO was formed," Mai Sayegh continued, "the women started thinking about reorganizing ourselves. Now the Union has branches in all countries where the Palestinian people live. The members number in the tens of thousands."

Sayegh described the work of affiliated women's groups on the Israeli-occupied West Bank. "The women there lead demonstrations, they organize in commissions to visit prisoners, to collect food and clothing for prisoners. They organize in commissions to look after families of martyrs.

"The women in the West Bank produce embroidery and dresses which we sell through the General Union in Beirut. We send the money back to them because they want to earn a living from this production. We encouraged the opening of more and more of our workshops so that Palestinian women wouldn't have to work in Israeli factories. We encourage them to work more and more with the Union and the Palestinian organizations."

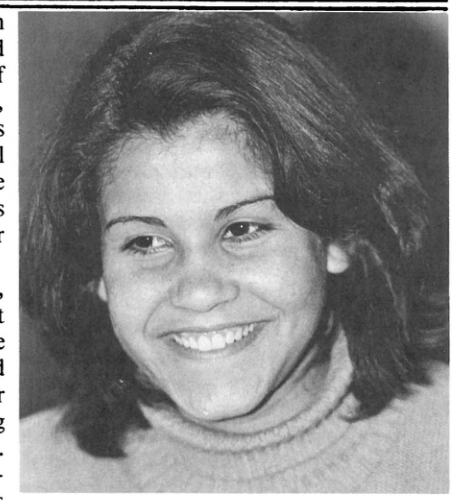
In discussing the role of Palestinian women in the struggle, Sayegh pointed out:

"The Palestinian women, like all Arab women, have the problem of traditions. In spite of all she gives to the revolution, she is still secondary in the family, and in Palestinian society. And she feels the revolution is not her main job. So you have to transform the concept of the woman in her own mind. The concept of her role has to be changed.

"We want more women to know their role through their fight. We want to make vaster and vaster the role of the woman.

"Of course there are big changes. We interviewed 100 women from Tal al Za'atar for a book we are preparing. Many of the women, one—who lost three sons in the fighting—remembers that she lost three sons, but she speaks more deeply about the daughter she lost. Her daughter was a member of the revolution. She's proud of that. This gives a hint about the changes in her mind."

In a quiet yet firm voice which slipped in and out of Arabic and English, Zeinab Qassem told us about the past several years of her life, the responsibilities she has shouldered and her dreams for the future.



Zeinab Qassem

Zeinab, now 17, was in a militia unit of al Fateh when the right-wing besieged the Tal al Za'atar refugee camp during the war in Lebanon. "I carried a Kalashnikov and besides that a first aid kit because I had training from a doctor," she explained. "All the fighters were doing many jobs, cooking, helping with water. Many of the girls and women were killed, because we would keep working in the day. You could always work at night, but in the morning the enemy could see you."

Just after the camp fell to the rightists, after 53 days of resistance, Zeinab escaped with a group of the fighters and travelled in the mountains with very little food and water for six days before reaching safety in the town of Damour. She now lives in Damour with her mother, and 15,000 other survivors of Tal al Za'atar. Zeinab's father, brother, sister and her sister's children were killed during the siege of the camp.

"I was born in Tal al Za'atar. and studied in Tal al Za'atar," Zeinab explained. "And I had military training in Tal al Za'atar. Everything in Tal al Za'atar. I have never seen Palestine. My family is from Kiryat Shimona, in Palestine. I know everything about it, but I don't see it. My dream is to marry in Palestine, not here."

We asked: "From what you know about fighting, how do you think the revolution can defeat Zionism? Israel had sophisticated weapons, tanks, napalm...."

"The revolution is not in the guns only," Zeinab responded. She noted the daily political work of the revolution and added, "Palestine is not for Zionism. We can liberate Palestine. Not now, it will be a long time for us to liberate Palestine."

Zeinab now heads the military training for 350 orphaned members of the Palestinian youth organizations, Ashbal and Zahrat, age seven to fourteen. When we met her she was helping to complete preparations for a boarding school for the orphans where she would work. Her work with the youth is the result of a conscious decision, for, "the new generation will continue our revolution," she asserts. □

DOCUMENT

THE PLO'S 15 POINT PROGRAM

What Does The PLO Want?

The political program of the Palestine National Council (PNC) is the authoritative statement of the PLO's current goals. It defines the strategic framework within which the PLO leadership makes its tactical decisions.

The current program was adopted by an overwhelming vote at the last session of the PNC, which met March 12 to 20, 1977. Meeting irregularly, the PNC is the parliamentary body of the PLO and includes close to 300 delegates from all the armed resistance groups, mass organizations and institutions, as well as representatives of each of the Palestinian exile communities.

[Preamble]

Proceeding from the basis of the Palestinian National Charter and the resolutions adopted by previous National Council sessions:

Determined to preserve the political resolutions and gains achieved by the PLO on the Arab and international levels during the period following the 12th session of the PNC;

Having studied and discussed the latest developments in the Palestine issue and the various activities of the Palestine revolution under the leadership of the PLO on the internal, Arab and international levels;

Having also considered the Arab and international situations;

Asserting its support for the Palestinian national struggle and the realization of its goals in all international and Arab forums and meetings;

The Palestine National Council affirms the following:

[The 15 Points]

1. The PNC affirms that the Palestine problem is the essence and origin of the Arab-Zionist conflict. UN Security Council Resolution 242 ignores the Palestinian people and its inalienable rights in its homeland. Therefore the PNC reaffirms its rejection both of this resolution and of dealings based upon this resolution on the Arab and international levels.

2. The PNC affirms the PLO's determination to continue the armed struggle and its concomitant forms of political and mass struggle to achieve the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian Arab people.

3. The PNC affirms that the struggle in the occupied territories in all its military, political and mass forms constitutes the central link in its program of struggle. On this basis, the PLO strives to escalate the armed struggle in the occupied territories, to escalate all forms of concomitant struggle, and to provide all forms of material and moral support to our masses in the occupied territories so that they can escalate the struggle and increase their resolve to persevere, defeat and liquidate the occupation.

4. The PNC affirms the PLO's stand which rejects all forms of American capitulationist settlements and all liquidationist plans. The Council endorses the PLO's determination to oppose and defeat any settlements which would be achieved at the expense of our people's inalienable national rights. If calls upon the Arab nation to shoulder its national responsibilities and to mobilize all its potential resources to confront these imperialist and Zionist schemes.

5. The PNC affirms the importance and necessity of national unity, both military and political, among all groups of the Palestinian revolution within the framework of the PLO, because this is one of the basic conditions for victory. Therefore, national unity must be strengthened at all levels, on the basis of commitment to these resolutions and the elaboration of programs that will insure this unity.

Commentary on PLO's 15 Point Program

The PLO's 15 Point Program is the current embodiment of a profound political development in the Palestinian resistance following the October 1973 Mideast war. Before the October War, the PLO had proclaimed its goals of struggle solely in long range terms of the total liberation of Palestine and the creation there of a democratic secular state where Moslems, Christians and Jews would be equal citizens. Following the 1973 war, the PLO adopted a transitional approach of waging struggle by defined stages, setting out interim goals for the current period as well as the long range goal of the democratic secular state.

The first embodiment of this new approach was the 10 Point Program put forward by the 12th session of the PNC in June 1974. That program advanced as the goal for the current historic period achievement of "the people's national independent fighting authority" on any part of Palestine liberated, which was understood to mean the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The program clearly identified its transitional nature, proclaiming that "any emancipatory step achieved constitutes a link in the chain of the strategy of the PLO to establish the democratic Palestine state."

The current 15 Point Program, adopted by the 13th session of the PNC in March 1977, was drafted to give fuller definition to the earlier program, to eliminate ambiguities and in particular to replace the call for a "national authority" with a call for an "independent national state."

It was also written to more clearly define the interrelation of a number of cardinal aims of the current stage: the struggle to obtain an independent national state on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, without forsaking the right of the Palestinian refugees from the rest of Palestine to return to their homes; the struggle to maintain and solidify the PLO's recognition as the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people;" and the struggle to block all attempts to achieve a Mideast peace accord at the expense of the PLO and the Palestinian people.

PREAMBLE: The "political resolutions and gains" referred to in the second paragraph include the October 1974 Rabat Summit's declaration in which all the Arab states recognized the PLO as "the sole representative of the Palestinian people in any Palestinian territory that is liberated" and a number of subsequent UN General Assembly resolutions which acknowledge the PLO as "the representative of the Palestinian people" and call for the realization of Palestinian national aspirations.

These diplomatic gains undermined the strategy long advanced by the U.S. and recently adopted by Egyptian President Sadat which champion Jordan and West Bank reactionaries, instead of the PLO, as the representatives of Palestinian interests.

The reaffirmation in the first paragraph of the Palestine National Charter, an early PLO document of general principles,

6. The PNC affirms its determination to maintain the right of the Palestinian revolution to be present on the soil of fraternal Lebanon within the framework of the Cairo Agreement and its Annexes, concluded between the PLO and the Lebanese authorities. It also affirms its adherence to the implementation of these agreements in letter and spirit, which provides for the Revolution's retention of its arms and the maintenance of the security of the [refugee] camps. The Council rejects any unilateral interpretation of this agreement, while expressing its respect for the sovereignty and security of Lebanon.

7. The PNC salutes the heroic, fraternal Lebanese people and affirms the PLO's support for the maintenance of Lebanon's territorial integrity, the unity of its people, and its security, independence, sovereignty and Arab character. The PNC affirms its pride in the support given by this heroic fraternal people for the PLO, which is struggling for the recovery of our people's national rights in its homeland as well as its right to return to this homeland. It strongly affirms the need to strengthen and consolidate the cohesion between all nationalist Lebanese forces and the Palestinian revolution.

8. The Council affirms the need to strengthen the Arab Front for Participation in the Palestinian Revolution and to deepen the cohesion of all forces participating in it in all Arab countries. It also stresses the need to escalate the joint Arab struggle and to augment the forms of support for the Palestinian Revolution in order to resist Zionist, imperialist plans.

9. The PNC resolves to promote Arab solidarity and struggle on the basis of anti-imperialist, anti-Zionist struggle and of action for the liberation of all the occupied Arab areas, and in support of the Palestinian revolution in its determination to regain the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian Arab people, without any reconciliation or recognition [of Israel].

10. The PNC affirms the right of the PLO to exercise its responsibilities in the struggle at the Arab national level and across any Arab territory for the sake of liberating the occupied lands.

11. The PNC resolves to continue the struggle to regain our people's national rights, foremost among which are the rights to return, to exercise self-determination and to establish its independent national state on its national soil.

12. The PNC emphasizes the importance of strengthening cooperation and solidarity with the socialist, non-aligned, Islamic and African states, and with all the national liberation movements in the world.

13. The PNC salutes the stands and struggles of all democratic states and forces against Zionism as a form of racism, as well as against its aggressive practices.

14. The PNC affirms the importance of relations and coordination with democratic and progressive Jewish forces, both within and outside the occupied homeland, which are struggling against Zionism as an ideology and a practice. The PNC calls upon all states and forces in the world which love freedom, justice and peace to cut off all forms of assistance to and cooperation with the racist Zionist regime and to refuse to have any contact with it or its tools.

15. Taking into consideration the important achievements made on the Arab and international levels since the PNC's 12th session, and having discussed the political report submitted by the PLO Executive Committee, the PNC decides the following:

a. The Council affirms the right of the PLO to participate in all international conferences, forums and efforts concerned with the Palestine question and with the Arab-Zionist conflict, on an independent and equal footing, with the aim of achieving our inalienable national rights as recognized by the UN General Assembly in 1974, in particular Resolution 3236.

b. The Council declares that any settlement or agreement affecting the rights of the Palestinian people made in the absence of this people will be completely null and void.

Long live the Palestinian Revolution!
Long live Palestinian unity among the Organizations of the Revolution!
Glory and immortality to our innocent martyrs!
Revolution until Victory!

was the PNC's response to the strong pressures exerted in the months before the PNC session by the U.S., Egypt and Saudi Arabia for revisions in the Charter to eliminate its numerous references to the liberation of all of Palestine. Its reaffirmation was symbolic of the nationalist independence of the PLO and its continuing commitment to struggle for the liberation of all of Palestine, rather than a commitment to the ideas outlined in the 33 articles of the National Charter, which no longer fully reflects Palestinian thinking and is the product of an earlier phase of the Palestinian movement.

POINT 1: Resolution 242, adopted by the UN Security Council in the aftermath of the 1967 Mideast war, calls for a peaceful settlement based on the one hand upon Israeli withdrawal from territories seized in June 1967 and on the other hand upon the acknowledgement by the bordering Arab states of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Israel "within secure and recognized boundaries." The resolution defines the Mideast conflict as one existing solely between established states: there is no hint of the centrality of the Palestinian problem, nor any mention of the Palestinian national character. The only reference to the Palestinians is oblique: a clause which calls for " a just settlement of the refugee problem."

The PLO has always denounced the resolution and rejected being party to negotiations based upon it, because the resolution totally ignores the Palestinian national reality. The long dormant Geneva Peace Talks, convened after the October 1973 Mideast war, accepted resolution 242 as the framework for negotiations, and hence the PNC here rejects PLO participation in the Geneva talks as long as the negotiations are based upon resolution 242.

POINT 4: In the wake of the 1973 war, the U.S. spearheaded political moves by Egypt, Saudi Arabia, other Arab states and various Israeli forces aimed at gaining a permanent peace in the Mideast which would deny Palestinian national aspirations. Usually the conception of such a peace settlement has included a recognition of a need for a Palestinian component, in order to give the settlement the air of legitimacy in the eyes of the Arab masses and ease the suppression of revolutionary Palestinian formations. Such moves include: efforts to split the PLO or to transform it into a "moderate" body under the control of various Arab states; attempts to bring forth Palestinian quislings as alternatives to the PLO; and endeavors to resurrect the claim of Jordan's King Hussein to speak in the name of the Palestinians.

A primary purpose of the current PLO program is to prevent just such attempts to put together a subservient Palestinian component for a Mideast peace accord. To confront "American capitulationist settlements" and Arab-Israeli "liquidationist plans," the PNC program commits the PLO to maintain the independence of its political and military action (points 2, 3, 6, 7, 10) and to wage a diplomatic campaign aimed at blocking any settlement process which tries to destroy or by-pass the PLO or constrain its commitment to fully achieve Palestinian national rights (points 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15).

POINT 5: Internal PLO disputes are sometimes misrepresented

(continued on page 10)

Commentary (continued from page 9)

as signs of a lack of commitment by resistance groups to national unity within the framework of the PLO. For example, although in 1974 the "Rejection Front" led by PFLP and the Arab Liberation Front withdrew their representatives on the PLO's 15 member Executive Committee over a disagreement with the transitional program, none of these groups split from the PLO itself nor did any withdraw from the elaborate network of PLO institutions. And at the last PNC in March 1977 these same groups, with the exception of the PFLP, voted for the current 15 point program and rejoined the Executive Committee.

The last PNC also adopted a number of recommendations calling for unity of the military wings of the commando groups and of the financial affairs of the various groups, while at the same time guaranteeing "that every group should maintain its ideological and organizational independence, within the framework of the political program of the PLO."

POINT 6: Lebanon is the only state near Israel with a large concentration of Palestinian refugees in which the PLO is able to openly engage in independent political and military activity, in-spite of some restrictions from the Syrian dominated Arab Deterrant Forces which now police the country. In the other countries adjacent to Israel, the PLO has been forced to function clandestinely or within severe government restrictions. The enemies of the PLO and the resistance itself both realize that the loss of this last relatively autonomous rear base in Lebanon would seriously weaken the PLO's position politically, militarily and diplomatically.

The status of the PLO in Lebanon is codified in several accords negotiated between the Lebanese government and the PLO, principally the Cairo Agreement of 1969, which grant the resistance autonomy within the refugee camps and allow it military bases in certain areas of south Lebanon. The revocation of these agreements was a key demand advanced during the recent Lebanese War by the rightwing forces, with the quiet backing of the U.S. and several Arab governments. One of the stated aims of the Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon in March 1978 was to force the annulment of the Cairo Agreement and the suppression of Palestinian autonomy throughout Lebanon.

POINT 9: The question of the criteria to use in determining relations with the Arab states is one that has wracked the Palestinian resistance since its inception. This point calls upon the PLO leadership to work towards solidarity with Arab states, using as its criteria whether the terms of the alliance will further the struggle against both imperialism and Zionism. It also calls upon the PLO to join in the struggle to regain the Syrian, Egyptian and Palestinian territories captured by Israel in 1967, but not to allow this struggle to lead to a compromise of Palestinian "inalienable national rights" (defined in point 11) or to Arab reconciliation with or recognition of Israel.

POINT 10: Although a number of Arab agreements have guaranteed to the PLO the right to freely organize the Palestinian refugees scattered across the Mideast, in reality most Arab states place restrictions on PLO activities. The state most directly addressed here is Jordan; since the aftermath of the 1970 "Black September" war against the PLO, King Hussein's regime has prevented all open political activity by the PLO and blocked commando raids across the Jordan River.

POINT 11: Here are the current strategic goals of the Palestinian revolution. All three goals complement each other: a sovereign Palestinian state (on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip) which embodies the Palestinian national will and is independent from interference from Israel, Jordan or other powers; the exercise of self-determination by all Palestinians in deciding the nature of this state and in finding ways of maintaining this right of self-determination as it applies beyond the realization of this state; the right of the refugees from pre-1967 Palestine to return to their homes inside Israel, as guaranteed originally in 1948 by UN General Assembly resolution 194 and by numerous subsequent resolutions.

The joining of these three national rights has become the standard formulation of Palestinian aspirations used in innumerable documents and statements issued by the PLO and by most resistance groups. The formulation is embodied in UN General Assembly resolution 3236. (see note on point 15).

POINT 14: Meetings between several resistance groups and left Israeli groups have occurred since 1969, but the current PLO program is the first to endorse such meetings as PLO strategy and moreover to call for "coordination" with anti-Zionist Israeli groups. The proviso that these groups must be "struggling against Zionism as an ideology" as well as against Zionism as "a practice"was added to address the concerns of those PNC delegates who denounced the series of meetings in 1967 between several PLO members and delegates from the Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestine Peace. The Israeli Council might be said to be in some degree anti-Zionist in practice—since it had called for a West Bank Palestinian state—but no one could dispute that the Council otherwise is by own admission explicitly committed to the basic tenets of Zionism.

In implementation of this point, meetings were held shortly after the PNC between high level delegations from the PLO and the Israeli Communist Party, Rakah; these meetings with an Israeli group were the first ever officially publicized by the PLO.

POINT 15: This formulation of the PLO's diplomatic strategy draws together a number of ideas from other points in the program. It calls upon the PLO to participate in any international peace conference "on an independent and equal footing" with all the other parties; this would necessitate winning the diplomatic status of a sovereign body representing a national entity and thus supersede UN Security Council Resolution 242, which reduced the Palestinian people to a humanitarian "refugee problem" (point 1 rejects resolution 242(. It calls on the PLO to enter such conferences with the aim of achieving the "inalienable [non-negotiable] national rights," as opposed to "all liquidationist plans" (as outlined in point 4). And it calls upon the PLO to struggle for those national rights acknowledged in UN General Assembly Resolution 3236, which calls for the realization of all the current PLO strategic goals (as formulated in article 11). In addition, this strategy is qualified by the transitional quality of current PLO policy, as indicated by point 9 in which the PLO pledges not to abdicate its struggle against Zionsim, even as the price for diplomatic gains.

The formulation of diplomatic goals is deliberately tied to the victories which the PLO has gained in the UN General Assembly in the last four years, in particular UN General Assembly resolution 3236. Called by some "the Palestinian international Magna Carta," resolution 3236 was passed by the General Assembly in November 1974, following the historic address to the UN by Yasser Arafat, chairman of the PLO Executive Committee. The Resolution states that the General Assembly "(1) reaffirms the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in Palestine, including: (a) the right of self determination without external interference; (b) the right to national independence and sovereignty; (2) reaffirms also the inalienable right of the Palestinians to return to their homes and property from which they have been displaced and uprooted, and calls for their return; (3) emphasizes that full respect for and the realization of these inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are indispensable for a solution of the question of Palestine."

In addition, resolution 3236 requests the Secretary General "to establish contacts with the Palestine Liberation Organization on all matters concerning the question of Palestine." Subsequent UN General Assembly resolutions reiterate a number of these points and even strengthen some, such as Resolution 3375, which "calls for the invitation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, to participate in all efforts, deliberation and conferences on the Middle East...on an equal footing with other parties, on the basis of resolution 3236."

U.S. INVOLVEMENT GROWS

Israel Expands Hold On Sinai

The ideological underpinnings of Israeli Prime Minister Menahem Begin's Likud Party, linked to Israeli perceptions of "security," Israeli imperialist exploitation of surrounding territories, its oil interests and militant settlement plans, have combined to create conditions that block an Israeli withdrawal from Sinai and may forestall a peace agreement between Egypt and Israel. The Israeli government has no intention of leaving the Sinai Peninsula unless forced to do so.

ISRAELI MILITARY INTERESTS

Retention of the Sinai provides the Israeli military with significant strategic and logistical advantages. Since the 1973 war, Israel has moved its military supply and air bases from the Negev, the southern semi-desert of Palestine which Israel seized in 1948, to "forward bases" in Sinai. The airbases in the Sinai are not defensive as Zionist military officials claim. They enable Israel to launch aggressive air attacks deep into Arab territory.

After the 1973 war Israel has sought to eliminate military weaknesses revealed there. They have increased and updated their entire war apparatus, mainly through arms purchases from the U.S. and through the development of their own defense industries. In the five years since the war, Israeli arms purchases from the U.S. have dramatically shifted the military balance of power in the Near East in their favor. The Sinai air bases have played a large role in this unprecedented expansion of Israeli power in the region.

Israel has eight air bases in the Sinai, most of which were captured from Egypt during the 1967 war. All of the bases have been considerably expanded and modernized. Israel's air force has more than tripled the number of planes it had in 1967, making it the third most powerful airforce in the world. It is estimated that Israel has half of its combat strength of some 600 U.S.-made fighters in the Sinai.

Defense Minister Ezer Weizman is seeking to retain control over at least three of the eight air bases in Sinai:

•Etzion directly south of the port of Eilat at the head of the Gulf of Aquaba. Israeli military officials regard this base as perhaps their most important in Sinai, and "well worth a diplomatic crisis" to retain, according to the *Washington Post*. From this air base, Israeli "high-performance" reconnaissance and combat aircraft patrol the shores of Saudi Arabia along the Red Sea coast as far south as the Bab el Mandeb strait at the eastern entrance of the Red Sea, between Aden and Djibouti. From Etzion Israel could launch a full-scale attack deep into Saudi Arabia; a likely target would be the Saudi base of Tabuk, only 120 miles from Eilat. The newly proposed oil pipeline extending from the Persian Gulf across Saudi Arabia to the port of Yanbu in the Gulf of Aquaba is also very vulnerable to strikes from Etzion.

Additionally, the Etzion airfield provides Israel a military umbrella for its shipping lanes, especially where the large oil tankers from Iran pass through the Gulf of Aquaba to the port of Eilat. Moreover, almost all of Israel's exports and imports going to and from East Africa, South Africa, the Far East and the Persian Gulf pass through Eilat.

The Etzion air base is also secretly used by the U.S. Air Force for long-range surveillance flights over the entire Red Sea area and parts of the Indian Ocean. The U.S. considers this air base as "vital" for ensuring U.S. economic and military interests in this region. "Consequently the future of Etzion in the event of any Israeli agreement with Egypt to abandon Sinai has become a military problem with global implications," writes *New York Times* military specialist, Drew Middleton.

*Palestine!*photo

Bedouin children forced off their land and confined to fenced-in area by Israei government in northern Sinai, close to Gaza Strip.

•Opfira at Sharm el Shaikh near the tip of the Sinai peninsula. Like the Etzion airfield, Opfira gives Israel the capability to provide air cover for her shipping lanes and to pose a military threat to the entire Red Sea area.

•Eitam in the Rafah area in northern Sinai. This air base enables Israel to police the entire Mediterranean coast as far west as the Suez Canal.

The giant air base of Bir Gifgafa (called Refidim by Israel) in central Sinai and four smaller air bases (Al Thamad, An Nakhl, Gebel Libne and Bi'r Thamadah) could probably be relocated although Israeli military hawks are loath to do so. If they are relocated, Israeli officials hope the U.S. will foot the bill—which could be billions. Israeli officials are also discussing ways to retain some of the airfields even if they must withdraw to the 1967 borders.

The U.S. has raised the question of building more airfields inside Israel. But Israel refuses for military and geopolitical reasons. Its burgeoning air force would not be able to operate within the 1967 borders because the sophisticated planes require wide open spaces to maneuver in, as do their pilot training programs. The U.S. proposal to sell 75 F-16 and 15 F-15 fighters to Israel would strengthen this argument. The Sinai has also served as an indispensable training ground for Israel's Armoured and Artillery Corps, and for testing newly acquired military equipment. And within the Sinai, Israel's airbases as well as their armed forces are tied to protecting its settlements and the recently discovered oil fields along the shores of the Gulf of Suez and the Mediterranean coast. In view of these factors, it seems clear that Israel will fight tooth and nail to retain all the bases for as long as possible.

ISRAELI OIL INTERESTS

A recent political advertisement in *Ma'arev,* an Israeli newspaper, reads:

> "What Golda Meir says about Golan Heights we say, with full consciousness and responsibility about Sinai. The fate of Egypt does not depend on its rule over Sinai. The fate of Israel depends on its rule over Sinai, all Sinai, from the security aspect, from the geopolitical aspect, and also—our attachment to the oil—which has burst near El-Tur will prove it—the economic aspect."

Israel's policy in Sinai is not motivated by military considerations alone. Large oil finds at El Tur, 50 miles northeast of Sharm

(continued on page 12)

Sinai *(continued from page 11)*

el-Sheikh along the Gulf of Suez and in northern Sinai near El-Arish, and the fertile farm land along the Mediterranean coast, have substantially increased its stakes in Sinai. Until now Israel has had to depend on Mexico and Iran for its imported crude oil. The potential output of the new oil discoveries at El Tur is twice as great as Israel's needs. To date Israeli has oil flowing from four drillings.

Development of the oil fields at El Tur presented Israel with economic and political problems. Economically, Israel's foreign reserves were dangerously low for a risky investment, and politically, it was possible that Israel would have to return El Tur to Egypt. The Israelis solved the problem by offering Moncrief International, a U.S.-based but Panamanian-registered oil company 25 percent of the profits in exchange for providing the capital outlay.

It is widely believed that Moncrief International is a cover for one or even a few of the "seven sisters" (the seven major oil companies which control most of the oil production throughout the Middle East and the world). By camouflaging their involvement any of the seven sisters could get around Arab boycott regulations which prevent commercial ties with Israel. Since Moncrief International is registered in Panama, it is sheltered by Panamanian corporate laws which provide relatively greater protection against audit.

The manner in which Israel acquired their sea-drilling equipment is an indication of the secrecy of their oil operations in the Sinai. It was reported in the *Economist* that Israel used Moncrief money to pay "a bribe of $1 million to the Sultan of Quaboos [Oman] for him to turn a blind eye when the rig was sneaked out of his realm and shipped across to Israel."

Neptun, an Israeli oil company, has also been drilling in the El Tur area. Most of the capital for this operation has been supplied by U.S. companies and Yardin, an Israeli firm with very strong connections to Begin's government. In the past 20 months Yardin shares have risen on the market by more than 400 percent. It has been reported that Neptun has invested close to $30 million—an outstanding sum if Israel is to hand over the El Tur oil fields to Egypt at some point in the future.

In the northern Sinai along the Mediterranean coast, the U.S.-based Western Desert oil company, also registered in Panama, is exploring for oil and natural gas reserves under contract with the Israeli government. Further explorations are being carried out by Kanossa, a Canadian-registered company, under a 50-50 split with Israel. All financing, however, has been put up by Kanossa. In addition, Israel has implemented a serious oil exploration program along the Mediterranean shores, as well as in Rafah Salient, according to Yizhak Moda'i, Israeli Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

This investment of millions of dollars indicates, as Energy Minister Moda'i has said on more than one occasion, that Israel does not intend to give back the Sinai oil fields. In fact, it is the Israelis' intention that even if they withdraw to the 1967 border and the oil fields come under Egyptian sovereignty, Israel would continue to control the oil fields. That is, even if there is a peace agreement, Israel would insist that it would ensure Israeli economic domination of Sinai. Israeli oil investments in Sinai would become foreign investments and the economic relationship would be openly neo-colonial.

ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS

During the decade that it has occupied the Sinai, Israel has followed its long-held policy of strengthening its presence in occupied lands by establishing military and civilian settlements. Israeli settlements in Sinai lie in an arc that extends from the Rafah approaches in northern Sinai to the Tur settlement in the Gulf of Suez. Israel's head of the Jewish Agency Settlement Department, Ra'anan Weitz, has said that the settlements in Sinai, particularly those in the Rafah approaches, are as important to Israel as those in the West Bank.

Following the 1967 war, the Israeli army began to establish settlements in the approaches. Their plan was to push Israel's borders as far west as possible. Said Defense Minister Moshe Dayan at the time, "I have proposed establishing Yamit...in order for it to serve as one of the components for establishing the border farther west."

The main obstacle to Israeli settlement plans in the Sinai have been the Bedouins, a traditionally nomadic Arab population who have been in the process of settling firm, permanent roots for several decades. Since occupation began in 1967, Israel's military has destroyed Bedouin homes, schools, and mosques in the region. Close to 10,000 Bedouins have been forcibly evicted from their land, and moved to designated fenced-off areas called "exemplary townships." In many cases the evicted Bedouins were rehired to work for Israeli industries on their own confiscated lands. Approximately 40,000 acres of rich Bedouin land has been expropriated by Israel, with only token financial compensation. Meanwhile, millions of Israeli pounds have been invested to create Israeli settlements on Bedouin land.

"As far as the authorities are concerned, the Bedouins are human dust that can, depending on the needs and circumstances, be expelled with the wink of the eye," a reporter wrote recently in the Israeli daily *Al Hamishmar*. The Bedouins have no legal status and are subject to arrest if they do not abide by the forced daily curfew which runs from 4pm to 7am. The Bedouins must also carry pass cards which are renewed bi-monthly.

The expulsion of Bedouins is carried out by a secret Israeli commando unit called the Green Squad, which moves "in a very quiet and clandestine fashion" so as not to attract publicity. Besides forcing Bedouins off their land and terrorizing them, the Green Squad also collect intelligence on all Bedouin movements in Sinai as well as in Israel. The Green Squad is headed by Alon Galili, who recently returned from the U.S. after completing a training course, according to the Israeli paper *Haaretz*.

Agriculture Minister Ariel Sharon is another leading figure tied to the Green Squad. Recently he doubled its budget to two million Israeli pounds, increased its manpower and added more green jeeps to its vehicle pool.

Israeli colonization of Sinai was halted temporarily after the 1973 war, but by 1974 the drive for more settlements began again in earnest. In 1974-1975, millions of Israeli pounds were earmarked for expanding Israel's settlements there. The intention of the

Israeli government was to incorporate the coastal zone of northern Sinai, from Gaza to El-Arish, into Israel.

The settlements have proved to be highly profitable, adding greatly to Israel's depleted foreign exchange reserves. "Originally established for security reasons, the northern Sinai settlements have proved lucrative enterprises. The weather is good, local Arab labor is cheap and the foreign-market demand for produce is high, particularly in winter," is how one writer for the *New York Times* put it recently. In the last five years, Israel has developed a sophisticated agricultural base in the Sinai, which Israeli sources have estimated may earn as much as $500 million within the next five years. As one Israeli official put it, "In the long run, the economic and social aspects of settlement will have far greater significance than the current disputes..."

The current settlement goals of the Begin government involve two separate plans. The first was designed by the Settlement Department of the Jewish Agency, and came to be known as the "Southern Plan". The main area for settlement was to be in the Yamit region. 1.5 million Israeli pounds were earmarked for this project, which began right before Egyptian President Sadat visited Israel. The main object of the "Southern Plan" was to quickly set up 7 to 12 settlements which would, according to Begin's cabinet, never be returned to Egypt. The plans for these settlements were to be carried out secretly so as not to disrupt the peace momentum. Tentative plans were also made at this time to establish 40 Israeli agricultural settlements in the next 10 years.

SCAM SETTLEMENTS

The second plan, initiated by Agriculture Minister Sharon, was directed "at a totally different expansion." The scheme, which was fully endorsed by Prime Minister Begin, involved establishing 25 "footholds" in the region between Rafah approaches and El-Arish in the north to the Israeli settlments along the Red Sea. Forty million Israeli pounds were invested for setting up these "agricultural observation posts." On paper, Sharon's plan would have doubled the territory known today as the Rafah approaches.

But Sharon was not content with this. In his capacity as head of the Water Authority, he sanctioned the erection of water towers (with no intention of drilling for water) in central Sinai at Bi'r Hasanah, Qusaynah and Bi'r Hanadah. His aim was to claim these areas so as to create "facts" along the El-Arish-El Tur line, thereby giving Israel a greater foothold in much of Sinai. In addition, Sharon instructed that land preparation be carried out in the El-Arish area, far beyond the Rafah approaches, under the guise of preparing for oil drillings.

Sharon's intention was to set up a "chain of dummy settlements" which Israel could be ready to give up to Egypt at a later stage of negotiations, on condition that Israel retain the settlements in the Rafah approaches. This settlement plan did not get as far as he would have liked. U.S. spy planes discovered Sharon's activities and reported to Washington, which immediately pressured Begin to stop them. Meanwhile, Defense Minister Weizman and other members of Begin's cabinet demanded that Sharon's plans be frozen "for the moment" because of the effect they would have on Egyptian-Israeli relations.

However, Sharon did succeed in establishing 13 "agriculture observation posts." After U.S. diplomatic pressure and "moderate elements in Begin's government restricted the scope of the plan, he could only "flesh out" existing settlements, or "stabilize" posts that were previously set up. For instance, Sharon asked Rafah approach settlers "to scatter branches around the sites of the 'posts' in order to create the misleading impression that settlements have been established there."

SINAI FIELD MISSION AND U.S. ROLE

One thing that is clear in the current negotiations in the Middle East is the large role played by the U.S. government. In the Sinai, the U.S. goes beyond international negotiations to perform quasi-military functions. As a result of the last Israeli-Egyptian agreement, the second disengagement agreement of 1975, a U.S. "warning station" was set up in western Sinai. Both Israel and Egypt were allowed a surveillance station in the U.S.-monitored buffer zone.

The Sinai Field Mission (SFM) was established in western Sinai under U.S. auspices to monitor and police all land and air movements by Israel and Egypt by means of an elaborate electronic battlefield. Much of the electronic technology in Sinai today was originally developed for use along the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Vietnam.

The U.S. contracted with two U.S.-based firms, E-Systems and the Mitre Corporation, to set up and run the U.S. warning stations. E-Systems has for years supplied the CIA and National Security Agency (NSA) with sophisticated communications equipment and electronic warfare technology. In 1972 the Department of Defense accounted for 90 percent of E-Systems' contracts; today this proportion has declined to 55 percent as sales to other agencies and foreign governments have increased, E-Systems' special communications and electronic intelligence devices are also used for domestic repression by U.S. and Latin American law enforcement agencies.

Mitre, like E-Systems, specializes in the manufacture of repressive technology. Domestically, Mitre is a large supplier of police equipment to the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration and has contracts with the U.S. military for communications information systems and military engineering.

Almost all of Mitre's employees have at one time been employed by U.S. intelligence agencies. Besides developing counter-insurgency technology, Mitre has published extensive intelligence reports on national liberation movements throughout the world. The PLO has been a major concern of Mitre.

U.S. "TECHNICIANS"—MILITARY PERSONNEL

Although Congress stipulated that no intelligence or military personnel would be allowed in Sinai, government reports have shown that most of the U.S. technicians were trained, and some may still be employed, by the Department of Defense (DOD) and U.S. intelligence agencies.

The latest Sinai Support Mission report to Congress, in October 1977, reinforces this view, arguing that the restriction against employing DOD and intelligence personnel is discriminatory to a number of Americans seeking employment in the Sinai. "Most applicants for positions as sensor technicians or communicators," it states, "tend to be former military personnel." It recommends that the only restriction on employment in the Sinai be against "persons who have served on active military duty or been employed by the DOD or a U.S. foreign intelligence gathering agency within one year from the date of hire or selection."

This loosening of restrictions coincides with suggestions that this U.S. presence in the Middle East may be prolonged and expanded significantly. The system was originally planned to last three years; a GAO report now suggests that American involvement will continue indefinitely.

The same source also notes that "one senior Israeli official has already suggested that the SFM could serve as a model for use in other Mideast trouble spots, such as the Golan Heights or the West Bank."

Sinai Support Mission Director Constantine William Kontos confirms elsewhere that "some very preliminary thought about sensors and patrol techniques" has been discussed as "part of a possible Arab-Israeli agreement being debated in Geneva."

Whatever the outcome of the current Middle East negotiations, it seems clear that the extensive American presence will continue to increase in the region. Arguments are now being made in U.S. ruling circles for establishment of a U.S. military base in eastern Sinai. As one writer put it recently in the *Washington Post*, "an American presence in the Sinai, with the possibility of direct access across the 10-mile-wide Gulf of Aqaba would provide an important deterrent to any internal or external threat against Saudi Arabia (or Jordan) and thus provide stability to the present pro-Western regimes." This in turn could lead to direct American involvement in any future hostilities. □

Lebanon *(continued from page 1)*

manufactured Skyhawks and Phantoms and the Israeli-made Kfir jet with the G.E. engine swooped down upon military positions and civilian areas alike, while the sophisticated F-15's made their debut to fly radar reconnaissance. The awesome display of U.S. firepower cleared the way for the advance of a massive Israeli troop movement, set by various sources as between 12,000 and 25,000 men.

Later that same day, Begin announced confidently at a press conference: "All honors to the army of Israel....In 20 hours units of our army accomplished, despite great difficulties of terrain and climate, the mission with which they were charged by the government of Israel....The operation started yesterday night and was completed today in the afternoon." The purpose of the operation, Begin announced, was to seize a "security belt" along Israel's northern border, and then to seek a "settlement that will insure the nonreturn of the murderers to the places from which they have been expelled and will insure that southern Lebanon no longer serves as a base for their aggression against Israel and its citizens."

In Washington, according to *New York Times* correspondent Bernard Gwertzman, the Israeli invasion had received a "sympathetic response" from the U.S. government. Hodding Carter, the State Department spokesman, all but endorsed the invasion as a legitimate form of defense, saying: "it has been clear for some time that the presence of Palestinian military units in southern Lebanon has posed a threat to Israel's security." Nonetheless, the belief that the fighting was over in less than 24 hours brought a sense of "relief," according to Gwertzman, to the Carter administration.

GUERRILLA RESISTANCE

The "relief" was short-lived for the fighting was far from over. Towns that were declared "neutralized" by the Israelis were described as sites of heavy battles the next day. Even while Begin was announcing the seizure of the "security belt" 4.5 miles deep, fighting was still raging at Bint Jbail and Taibe, each only 1.5 miles from the border. In both villages the Israeli troops were forced to fight from house to ruined house to quiet the resistance.

In many places the Palestinian fighters effectively retreated before the Israeli advance and then moved behind their lines in small mobile groups. The Israelis had difficulties fighting the guerrillas from fixed positions and fortified defense lines.

As if to disprove yet another time the Israeli premise that territory equals security, Palestinian artillery continued to pummel northern Israel even after the invaders captured the misnamed "security belt." The Palestinian forces, using Soviet-made 130 mm. cannons with a range of 15 miles could fire into northern Israel right over the "security belt" as could their specially upgraded Katuysha missile launchers with a 10 mile range. These military realities made a mockery of Israeli Chief of Staff Mordechai Gur's claim over Israeli radio: "The principal terrorist infrastructure affecting...the settlements in the north was within ten kilometers [4.5 miles]."

Within 48 hours of Begin's false announcement of the successful completion of the Israeli army mission in Lebanon, the mood in Washington had shifted from "relief" to worry, as the commando resistance continued to harry Israeli forces. The *New York Times* military analyst Drew Middleton wrote: "There is a strong feeling among American sources, most of whom served in Vietnam, that the Israelis have not yet realized the problems involved in fighting against guerrillas in territory that is at least partly hostile."

ISRAEL'S POLITICAL GOALS

On Saturday, March 18, as the PLO fighters continued to shell northern Israel and resist the invasion, the Begin government made the decision to extend the scope of the invasion. In two major thrusts, Israeli troops moved to occupy all territory up to the Litani River, except a strip around the port of Tyre.

There are at least two inter-related factors responsible for the decision to move Israeli troops north: the first, as previously described, was the embarassing failure of the initial stage of the invasion to silence the guerrillas' guns. The second factor involved a change in political goals due to a shift in the international situation.

When Israel invaded Lebanon its strategy was based on the premise that Syria and Lebanon would clamp down on the PLO. In the words of Mordechai Gur in a March 18 radio interview: "We see no reason why the Arab world with its deterrent forces cannot get organized to prevent terrorist activity from Lebanese territory." Gur recalled that Jordan, Egypt and Syria had "several years ago" learned to prevent guerrilla operations in their territory.

The Israeli government was at the outset confident that the U.S. government would assist by serving as an intermediary to secure an agreement with the Syrian and Lebanese governments to police the Palestinians in southern Lebanon. As the fighting continued, however, and Israel refused to heed warnings against involvement in prolonged anti-guerrilla warfare, the U.S. government decided to seek a UN force to police southern Lebanon, rather than the political concessions which Israel wanted from the Arab states.

The purpose which the U.S. envisioned this UN force serving was quite consonant with Israel's expressed anti-resistance goals: as Harold Saunder, the State Department's Intelligence Director, and nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, "What is needed is a force to prevent the return of those [Palestinian and left Lebanese] groups that will turn that part of Lebanon into a battleground. The force would have to have more than an observer role. Clearly it would have to be a force with a mandate to control access to the territory in question."

The concern of the U.S. government was that without the UN troops the unsettled military situation would continue to involve Israeli and Palestinian forces in direct confrontation, and that beyond this consideration, the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon would totally stall the already sporadic movement toward a negotiated settlement between Israel and Egypt. Very much to his dismay, Begin learned that he would not be able to elicit a postponement of the U.S. introduction of its proposal to the UN Security Council, or even of the vote on the UN force, until he arrived for scheduled talks in Washington. Equally disturbing to Begin was his inability to use his occupation of Lebanon to strengthen his hand with Carter during their talks.

Israeli troops then rushed to seize as much territory as possible in advance of the expected UN troops. By taking the area south of the Litani—and pushing to the north of the river those PLO forces not in Tyre—they hoped to clearly outline a region in which the UN forces, or some other body, could be made responsible for excluding the progressive forces.

LONG CONFRONTATION IN THE SOUTH

The south of Lebanon has been an area of confrontation between the Palestinian fedayeen and Israel since the late sixties. After Black September 1970 and the ensuing ouster of the commandos from Jordan, southern Lebanon took on a new importance as the only remaining area on the Israeli frontier where the Palestinians could have a rear base for raids and shelling across the border. The frequent Israeli bombings and incursions into the area in an attempt to root out the Palestinians led to a flight of villagers from the South, where they were already suffering from governmental neglect and economic troubles.

These problems were exacerbated still further in mid-1976: as the right-wing militias, and the Syrian troops then allied to them, fought against the Palestinians and left Lebanese in central Lebanon, Israel seized the opportunity to move into the South. Members of the Phalangist militia were brought by ship from Jounieh, a rightist-held port north of Beirut, for training in Israel. There, they were armed—sometimes with weapons of U.S. manufacture—and sent across the Lebanese border. Since then, with artillery support occasionally supplemented by Israeli troops, the Lebanese rightist militia in the South under the command of Major Sa'ad Haddad has been contending with the

Palestinians and left Lebanese forces. It never was able to gain control over very much territory, however, being confined essentially to inclaves along the Israeli border. (It was Haddad's troops who were responsible for some of the most grisly atrocities of the Israeli invasion. In Khiam, for example, they massacred 70 children and other civilians who had sought refuge in a mosque. These atrocities were obliquely ackowledged by apparently embarassed Israeli officials.)

The Israeli sphere of influence in southern Lebanon had more than military dimensions, however. The Israeli-Lebanese frontier was opened to permit trade and the employment of Lebanese in Israeli enterprises. Called the "Good Fence" by Israel, the border was described as the "Wall of Disgrace" by nationalist Arabs. Israeli currency began to circulate along with Lebanese money in the South and Israeli goods were sold in Lebanese shops. The number of Lebanese workers in Israel, many of them women employed in the textile industry, reached a significant level. Like Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza employed in Israel, the southern Lebanese workers were given menial tasks at low rates of pay.

The Israelis are now demanding not only that the Palestinian and leftist Lebanese forces be excluded from the South, but that the bloodthirsty followers of their ally Major Haddad be given legitimate status as the representatives of Lebanese government authority in the South, and that Israel be accorded the right to certain military presence in the area. Israel already has a "joint command" with Haddad's forces, and even if Haddad's troops are made part of the Lebanese army, Israel wants to maintain this "special relationship." Furthermore, on an economic and social level, Israel demands continued access to the cheap labor of the Lebanese South, including the right to send their own transport in to pick up the workers, and the right to have their own currency in circulation there. These demands which amount to a call for Israeli colonial control of the region run parallel to the concepts of occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip developed over the last ten years by Moshe Dayan, now the Israeli Foreign Minister. They both reflect the new modifications of Begin's traditional version of Zionist expansionism, which yearned for control of "empty lands."

ANTI-CIVILIAN TACTICS

The tactics Israel used to force the mass exodus from the South are reminiscent of U.S. methods in Indochina. A correspondent of the *Washington Post,* H.D.S. Greenway, wrote from the ruins of Bint Jbail, "It is clear that the Israelis have used the same tactic that the Americans used in Vietnam: concentrated firepower and air strikes to blow away all before them—be they enemies or civilians—in order to hold down their casualties." Avoiding high casualties was an important domestic political consideration for the Israelis.

The result at Khiam, for example, calculates *Jeruslem Post* military correspondent Hirsh Goodman, was that for every commando the Israelis estimated to be in the town, they fired a dozen 155 mm. artillery shells. And the air force dropped at least 20 tons of TNT on Khiam.

These tactics did not damage the capacity of the PLO and leftist Lebanese to fight: PLO sources reported that less than 300 of its fighters were killed. But they did lead to a terrible toll, estimated at 2,500, among the civilian population.

It is apparent that the terrible devastation was meant as a threat to villagers who had cooperated with the PLO and progressive Lebanese forces. General Gur commented on Israeli radio that "There are villages which were badly hit and there are villages which were moderately hit and there are villages which were not hit at all. I can only express the hope that in the future all the villages will prevent the entry of terrorists because those we hit after several years off hostile activity, we have preferred not to hit, but they brought the strike upon themselves by their behavior against our civilian population over several years."

These brutal tactics led to a massive flight of refugees: in all, over a quarter of a million people fled to Beirut and Saida, most with only a few possessions. The human suffering was enormous—but for Israel a depopulated area was easier to police.

FACTORS IN THE FUTURE

There are a number of factors which will influence the course of events in southern Lebanon aside from the determination of the Israeli government to hold the territory if possible, or at least to prevent the presence there of PLO or progressive Lebanese forces. Among these factors are the following:

• *Syria.* Syrian troops, according to the Israelis, resisted neither the invasion, nor the bombing of points in central Lebanon near Syrian emplacements. This might be understood in the framework of a Syrian desire to avoid all-out war with Israel, especially since the defection of Sadat from the Arab front against Israel. But there will be a great deal of U.S. and Israeli pressure on Syria in the coming months to police the Palestinian fedayeen.

• *The Lebanese Right.* Since the conclusion of the civil war in November 1976, the right has been rearming, retraining and consolidating its strength. The right has an historical opportunity to make a thrust from their concentrations in the North to meet up with Israeli forces in the South. An optimal moment for this may have passed once the UN troops were stationed along the Litani River, but the situation is very fluid. The right may decide to renew civil war in the very near future.

• *The UNIFIL.* The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, created by a March 19 resolution, was assigned three tasks by the UN: 1)"confirming the withdrawal of Israeli forces;" 2)"restoring international peace and security;" 3)"assisting the government of Lebanon in insuring the return of its effective authority in the area." The PLO has accepted the presence of the UNIFIL, considering it an observer force to check on Israeli withdrawal. The Israelis, on the other hand, want to see the UNIFIL outfitted as an "anti-terrorist" unit with armoured vehicles and the power to search and arrest. The Israelis maintain that the UNIFIL should exclude the PLO fighters from the south of the Litani, while the PLO points to the Cairo Accords it signed with the Lebanese government in 1969, legalizing the armed presence of the PLO in the South. The operations of UNIFIL could become a matter of contention.

• *The United States.* While the U.S. government has expressed displeasure with Begin's excesses, and while Carter may be genuinely frustrated with Israel's inflexibility, no material action has yet been taken to demonstrate disapproval in Washington. Indeed, Begin flew home from the talks in Washington—which were supposed to have been so strained—with a promise of the FLAIR night-fighting system. This very system, originally promised to the Israeli military by U.S. President Gerald Ford, was refused by Carter when he first came into office: Carter said then the system was an example of the "sophisticated" weapons systems which his administration would try to restrict from shipment abroad.

Even more to the point, only the mildest possible statements have been made on the use of weapons of U.S. manufacture in the invasion of Israel. As required by law, Secretary of State Vance reported to the U.S. Congress that U.S. weapons had been used in the invasion of Lebanon. The report was tempered with the recommendation that there be no termination of military aid to Israel, as a 1974 law provides, since Israel has said its troops

(continued on page 16)

URGENT: *REFUGEE AID CAMPAIGN*

Palestinian and progressive Lebanese organizations are doing what they can to alleviate the suffering of the 265,000 refugees from southern Lebanon. The Palestine Solidarity Committee has received an urgent appeal from the Palestine Aid Society. The cooperative workshops, kindergartens and other facilities of this organization have been turned into relief centers: funds are urgently required for the pressing needs of the refugees.

Please send your contributions to the PSC which will forward them to Lebanon. Make checks payable to PSC, marking them "for refugee relief." You may use the return remittance envelope enclosed.

Protest Begin and the Zionist Parade

Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, U.S. elected officials and Zionist organizations are planning to celebrate the 30 anniversary of the establishment of the state of Israel with a gala parade up Fifth Avenue May 7.

Join the counter-demonstration
May 7 at 11 AM
50th St. and Sixth Ave.

SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE!

NO U.S. AID TO ISRAEL

ISRAELI TROOPS OUT OF LEBANON

Sponsored by the Palestine Action Coalition
Contact:Palestine Solidarity Committee,
P.O. Box 1757 Manhattanville Station, N.Y.,N.Y. 10027

Bulk Rate
U.S.Postage
PAID
Permit No.6801
New York,N.Y.

PALESTINE!
Box 1757 Manhattanville Station
New York, New York 10027
Address Correction Requested
Forwarding and Return Postage Guaranteed

Lebanon *(continued from page 15)*

will be withdrawn and since—in an extremely optimistic version of reality—Israel is making progress towards a peace agreement. Another agreement with the U.S. was broken when the Israelis used cluster bombs in southern Lebanon—a devastating anti-personnel weapon which was used against the Rashidye refugee camp near Tyre and very possibly elsewhere in southern Lebanon. The cluster bombs, or CBU's used by the U.S. in Indochina, are large cannisters which contain a number of small bombs; these explode separately over a wide area, scattering deadly shrapnel. According to a secret agreement with the U.S., Israel was to use the CBU's only in full-scale war, and then only against anti-aircraft sites and other well-fortified positions.

This very tolerant U.S. attitude towards the massive assault on southern Lebanon seems to presage little real pressure to force Israel to cease its attacks on Lebanon.

•*The Palestinians* The invasion of Lebanon precipitated mass protests in the streets of Amman—which were eventually suppressed by the Jordanian army. And throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Palestinian lands occupied by Israel for eleven years, demonstrations broke out for six days in every major city: Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nablus, Ramallah, al Bireh, Halhoul, Jericho, Jenin, Tulkarm, Gaza town and Khan Yunis. Israeli troops clamped down harshly, killing at least three Palestinians, as youths took to the streets, stoned military vehicles, burned tires and set up roadblocks. Most schools were shut down in protest and only a few of the 70,000 West Bank Palestinians who work in Israeli enterprises showed up for their jobs.

According to all reports from Lebanon, the Palestinian forces were exhilerated by the course of the battle. On the face of it, this appears to be paradoxical: no one can deny that the results of the Lebanese invasion have put the Palestinians even more squarely between the Israeli hammer and the Syrian anvil. On the other hand, as Colon Smith of the *London Observer* wrote, "For the first time since the fedayeen repulsed an Israeli expedition at the battle of Karameh the Palestinians were engaging the Israelis in open conflict." Since Karameh, major battles have been fought against Jordanian troops, Syrian troops and Lebanese reactionaries. Now the fedayeen had an opportunity to confront Israeli forces in full-scale battle, this time with some very valuable artillery pieces at their disposal.

The performance of the PLO was real justification for the upsurge in Palestinian morale. Yasser Arafat commented, "Our men fought for eight days until the Israelis, not us, asked for a cease fire. Our tactics worked; we fell back in front of their advance, then turned back at them from the sides. We have destroyed the myth of Israeli military superiority."

SUBSCRIBE TO *PALESTINE!* TODAY
PO BOX 1757 Manhattanville Station, N.Y., N.Y. 10027

Subscribe to **Palestine!** for regular, reliable news of the Palestinian struggle, analysis of U.S. policy toward the Palestine issue and reports of solidarity activites in the U.S. Make checks payable to Palestine Solidarity Committee.

☐ I enclose $5 for ten issues of **Palestine!**
☐ $8 additional for foreign air mail
☐ I want to make a contribution of $_____

Name _____

Address _____ Apt._____

City _____ State_____ Zip_____

Glad Day Press
UNION SHOP I.U. 450
308 Stewart Ave., Ithaca, N.Y. 14850